

Darwin ~~and~~ Freud

AP® EUROPEAN HISTORY
2010 SCORING GUIDELINES

Q2

Question 7

Analyze the ways in which the theories of both Darwin and Freud challenged traditional European ways of thinking about religion, morality, and human behavior in the period circa 1850–1950.

9–8 Points

- The thesis is explicit and offers a clear analysis of impact. Stronger theses introduce themes like broad intellectual and religious transformations or offer general characterizations of the intellectual shifts brought about by the work of Darwin and Freud.
- The organization is clear, consistently followed, and effective in support of the argument.
- The essay is well balanced. Strong essays discuss the theories of Darwin and Freud and analyze explicitly how each challenged traditional European views in a variety of ways.
- All major assessments of impact in the essay are supported by detailed evidence.
- The essay may contain minor errors that do not detract from the argument.

7–6 Points

- The thesis is explicit and offers some analysis of impact.
- The organization is clear, effective in support of the argument, but not consistently followed.
- The essay is generally balanced. Essays in this category discuss the theories of Darwin and Freud and analyze how they challenged at least two traditional European views (sometimes unevenly).
- Most major assessments of impact are supported by direct and relevant evidence.
- The essay may contain one major or several minor errors that detract from the argument.

5–4 Points

- The thesis may be underdeveloped or not fully responsive to the question but does attempt some appropriate analysis of impact.
- The organization may lack clarity and effectiveness in some places and may not be followed consistently.
- The may contain some imbalance. Essays in this category may only explicitly address either Darwin or Freud but must address how at least one traditional European view was challenged with any degree of specificity.
- Assessments of impact are supported by relevant evidence.
- The essay may contain major errors or misleading generalizations that detract from the argument.

3–2 Points

- The essay may contain a weak or invalid thesis that merely repeats or paraphrases the prompt. A weak or invalid thesis may make little or no attempt at assessing the impact of Darwin and Freud.
- Organization is unclear and ineffective.
- The essay shows serious imbalance. Essays in this category may address only the ideas of Darwin or Freud or both and may only make minimal or incorrect attempts at assessing their impact on European ways of thinking.
- Attempts at assessment of impact are supported by minimal evidence.
- The essay may contain several major errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 7 (continued)

1–0 Points

- There is little or no discernible attempt at a relevant thesis.
- There is little discernible organization.
- There is little or no direct discussion of Darwin or Freud or their impact on European ways of thinking; essays in this category may be entirely or mostly off task.
- Little or no supporting evidence is used.
- The essay may contain numerous errors that detract from the argument.

Charles Darwin (1809–1882)

Context for Darwin:

- Growth of scientific education and institutions
- Declining church attendance and growing secularization
- New social discourses
 - Positivism and the growing prestige of science — Auguste Comte (1798–1857), *Positive Philosophy* (1830–1842); science as culminating point of human intellectual and social development.
 - Materialism — mental and spiritual forces and cultural ideals were seen to be the product of physical forces; truth found in material existence, not intuition or feeling.

Darwin's major contributions and ideas

- *On the Origin of Species* (1859)
 - Theory of natural selection articulated as the principle mechanism through which evolution occurred; similar ideas were developed nearly simultaneously by Alfred R. Wallace (1823–1913).
 - More living organisms came into existence than could survive; variety of species is infinite; new biological forms emerged from older ones.
 - Those species possessing unique traits that made survival possible were thought to have a marginal advantage; only those well adapted to a specific environment survived to reproduce.
 - Life constituted a competitive struggle for existence (some textbooks note Darwin borrowing ideas for this theory from Thomas Malthus).
- *The Descent of Man* (1871)
 - Discussed implications of natural selection for humans.
 - Indicated that the human body, consciousness and religious intuition evolved to ensure the survival of the species.
 - A divine being was not needed to provide an image or model for humanity.

Consequences (challenges to traditional ways of thinking)

- Called into question biblical narrative of creation; challenged traditional Judeo-Christian view of nature as immutable and humanity as the unique creation of God.
- Challenged Enlightenment perspectives.
 - Rejected the idea that nature and society were harmonious by focusing instead on ideas of competition and continual struggle.
 - Undermined assumption that nature was tranquil and noble and humans were universally rational; emphasized that only the fittest survived in a process of constant conflict.
 - Emphasized the ability of biology to determine culture.
 - Undermined liberal belief in human mastery of nature and idea of engineering social progress.
 - Undermined deistic view of God as the creator of a rational and rule-bound universe.
- Influenced social scientists who misapplied some of Darwin's theories to formulate hypotheses about racial difference and the evolution of civilizations (Social Darwinism). Social Darwinists — e.g., Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) — asserted the following:
 - Superior and inferior cultures were in perpetual competition with each other.
 - *Social Statics* (1851) asserted the importance of laissez-faire policies and individual competition; argued that progress was possible only in a society where the unfit were not allowed to succeed.
 - *Synthetic Philosophy* (1850s–1896) argued that evolution is a progressive movement of all things from simplicity to complexity; uninhibited marketplace is the truest test of fitness.
 - Darwin's ideas could be applied to explain cultural difference and the capacity (or lack thereof) of primitive peoples to become civilized.

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Question 7 — Historical Background Notes (continued)

- Racial traits and differences were permanent and unchangeable — e.g., Benjamin Kidd in *Social Evolution* (1894) argued that Africans were biologically defective and doomed to extinction. For Kidd, this functioned as a justification for white rule.
- Different cultures and races (which Social Darwinists sometimes misidentified as different species) followed distinct and separate developmental paths.
- Other areas of impact for Darwinian and Social Darwinian thought between 1850 and 1950:
 - Encouraged the study of heredity and genetics.
 - Influenced the development of eugenics (founded 1883 by Francis Galton and Karl Pearson) and, ultimately, Nazi racial ideologies.
 - Influenced the development of new social scientific disciplines like anthropology and criminology.
 - Promoted ethics of individualism and competition; justified the exploitation of colonial peoples.

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

Context for Freud:

- Challenge to 19th-century norms; turn toward the irrational in psychology, literature and art.
- Questioning of the Enlightenment faith in reason — e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)
 - *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) — the irrational in human behavior is as important as the rational; instinct and ecstasy are crucial in assessing human motivation.
 - *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887) — morality as a human creation/convention with little relation to reality; Christianity and notions of respectability are stultifying.
- Growing concerns about social fatigue, weakness and unsettledness — e.g., Max Nordau (1849–1923)
 - *Degeneration* (1892) — modern art, male lethargy and female hysteria were signs of decline and overstimulation.

Freud's major contributions and ideas

- Study of the unconscious
 - Unconscious was the place where the patient's psychic reality resided.
 - In the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud indicates that dreams can provide a point of access to hidden realities and desires; interpreting dreams can reveal a repressed part of the personality.
- Discovery of infantile sexuality
 - Noted that infantile sexuality was universal (Oedipus and Electra Complex).
 - Ideas articulated in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).
- Psychoanalysis/talking cure
 - Nonjudgmental therapist could help patient, through talk, discover aspects of the self that society called deviant or unmentionable and uncover the unconscious sources of neuroses.
- Id, ego and superego (mental processes below the level of consciousness)
 - Id (primal, innate, irrational drives for sexual and sensual pleasures, aggressive impulses, etc.).
 - Superego (internalization of social and moral regulations that society imposes on human behavior).
 - Ego (mediates between the id and superego; individual personality is the result of attempts by the ego to deal with impulsive desires and social or cultural limitations on behavior).
 - Ideas were formulated from the late 19th century on and first published in a 1923 paper titled "The Ego and the Id."

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Question 7 — Historical Background Notes (continued)

Consequences (challenges to traditional ways of thinking)

- Challenged traditional moral (religious) evaluations of human behavior.
 - Religiously inspired ideas of guilt were problematic impositions that did not correspond to human nature; sexual life should be explored from a scientific point of view, not a moral one.
 - Argued that personal, social and religious/institutional repression led to neuroses.
- Abandoned optimism of the Enlightenment; embraced a more pessimistic worldview that saw humans as being motivated by sexual impulses, death and destruction.
- Argued that civilization was based on the repression of primitive drives that might emerge at any time.
 - Freud did not argue that the id should prevail or that society should free itself from all forms of repression; he said that the survival of human civilization depended on the repression of some instinctual drives.
- Asserted that gender identities were not purely biological or anatomical; gender identities were created through various mental processes and life experiences.
 - Freud rejected 19th-century ideas about passionless women; still tended to privilege motherhood as the most important female role (these ideas were challenged by female psychoanalysts like Karen Horney [1885–1952] and Melanie Klein [1882–1960]).
- 20th-century implications:
 - Freud provided European society with psychoanalytic discourses (id, ego, superego; talking cure; infantile sexuality; Oedipus complex; etc.) that would, by the 1920s, permeate Western culture.
 - Freud provided the basis for a psychoanalytic movement that experienced some fragmentation.
 - Carl Jung (1875–1961) — subconscious is a soul formed by personal experience and collective memories inherited from ancestors.
 - Freud and many others said that World War I revealed human irrationality.
 - Freud's ideas influenced how sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists understood social conflict and group behavior.
 - Freud's ideas influenced surrealist art (especially those works that depicted dreamlike visions), modern literary techniques (including stream-of-consciousness writing), and new attitudes about sexuality.